



Workforce Board

Electronic Newsletter

Volume 8, Number 2

February 24, 2006

What's inside?

- **Employers Report Continued Shortage of Skilled Workers**
- **Workforce Development Issues a Priority This Legislative Session**
- **President Proposes Budget Cuts in Workforce Programs**
- **Governor Appointed Vice Chair of National Governors Association's Workforce Committee**
- ***High Skills, High Wages* Update Focal Point of March Board Agenda**
- **Briefly**
 - *Gallwas, Dixon and Arteaga on the Move*
 - *New WTB Website Coming in Early March*
- **Upcoming Events**

Employers Report Continued Shortage of Skilled Workers

Washington employers have difficulty finding skilled workers, according to the Workforce Board's latest biennial survey of employers' training needs and practices.

According to the survey which was conducted in the autumn of 2005 and based on hiring practices in the previous 12 months when the state's economy was coming out of a recession and rebounding rapidly, 51 percent of employers reported difficulty finding qualified job applicants (compared to 45 percent two years ago). Extrapolating from the survey results, an estimated 69,000 Washington firms (or 1 in 3) had difficulty finding qualified job applicants in 2005.

Employers had the greatest difficulty finding vocationally trained workers at the subbaccalaureate level, which is much higher than the shortage of workers at baccalaureate or above levels. And the skills employers had the greatest difficulty finding were occupational-specific, i.e. they wanted to hire an emergency room registered nurse, but could not find an applicant that was qualified. In addition to occupation-specific skills, employers reported difficulty in finding staff with good work habits, an adaptability to change, and the ability to accept supervision and to work in teams.

The survey, to be published later this spring, also noted that:

- The workforce development areas where employers were having the most difficulty in finding qualified applicants for any jobs they were hoping to fill were Northcentral, Olympic, and Southwest.
- When firms couldn't find a qualified applicant, they usually ended up hiring unqualified staff.

For more information about the survey, contact Bryan Wilson, 360.753.0891, bwilson@wtb.wa.gov.

Workforce Development Issues a Priority in Washington Legislature

2006 is the year for workforce development priorities. Bills and budget appropriations are moving forward to: 1) replicate Navigation 101, a comprehensive career guidance program; 2) develop pilot programs in high school to move students directly into apprenticeship programs in the construction industry; and 3) provide tax breaks and additional monies for customized training for incumbent workers.

The role of career and technical education awareness in workforce development is particularly high as legislators realize the critical importance of high school reform and the need to provide more postsecondary education and training for jobs that address the economic needs of employers. Legislation and an appropriation is also moving forward to address the top recommendation of the Health Care Personnel Task Force to conduct a health care provider survey.

To follow a specific bill and or compare budget proposals and appropriations, go to the Legislation section at www.wtb.wa.gov. Wes Pruitt, 360. 586.1652, wpruitt@wtb.wa.gov or Madeleine Thompson, 360.753.5653, mthompson@wtb.wa.gov also can provide additional information.

President Proposes Budget Cuts in Workforce Programs

The President is proposing cutting both the Department of Education and the Department of Labor 2007 total discretionary budgets which will have impacts on workforce development systems across the country.

At the Department of Education, the President is proposing a decrease of \$3.1 billion for a total discretionary budget of \$54.4 billion. If approved, 42 programs, including those such as Tech-Prep Education State Grants, Vocational Education National Programs, and Vocational Education State Grants, Even Start, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR-UP) would be eliminated.

The budget does however include spending:

- \$380 million for the *American Competitiveness Initiative* to promote more rigorous courses in math and science at the K-9 level; increase the number of students passing Advanced Placement tests in math and sciences; and encourage qualified professionals to teach high school math and science courses.
- \$10.68 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B state grants, an increase of \$100 million from FY 2006.

- \$1.475 billion for a new *High School Reform Initiative* that requires states to expand high school assessments.
- \$100 million for America's Opportunity Scholarships, a private school choice or supplemental service program for students enrolled at schools in need of restructuring under No Child Left Behind.
- \$35 million for the Department of Education's portion of a multi-agency *National Security Language Initiative*, including instruction in foreign languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, and Urdu in elementary and secondary school.

At the Department of Labor (DOL), the total discretionary budget is reduced by 6 percent or \$566 million to \$10.9 billion. Here, the primary emphasis is on the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Under this budget proposal, WIA would consolidate Adult Employment and Training Activities, Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities, Youth Activities, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and Employment Service State Grants (including Labor Market Information/One-Stop Career Centers) into a new, \$3.41 billion program, *Career Advancement Accounts (CAAs)*.

The budget also includes two further WIA reauthorization proposals, i.e. to allow

- local boards to transfer up to 40 percent of WIA funds between programs with the approval of the Governor,
- Governor to reallocate from local workforce investment areas that exceeded unexpended balances of 30 percent for youth, adult, and dislocated worker formulas to other local workforce areas.

The proposed DOL budget also includes \$150 million for the President's Community-Based Job Training Grants initiative, and \$50 million for YouthBuild, a program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to be transferred to DOL to coordinate activities with the CAAs.

Several programs/initiatives would be terminated under the President's budget for DOL including America's Job Bank, the Responsible Reintegration for Young Offenders, the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program, and Work Incentive Grants.

For more details on the Department of Education's FY 2007 proposed budget, go to <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget07/index.html> and for the Labor Department go to http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/whatsnew/eta_default.cfm?id=1351.

Governor Appointed Vice Chair of National Governors Association's Workforce Committee

Washington's Governor Chris Gregoire is the new Vice Chair of the National Governors Association's Education, Early Education and Workforce Committee. The Committee works on issues in the areas of early education, elementary and secondary education and special education as well as workforce development and labor.

Although she has often disclaims the label of “Education Governor”, clearly an educated workforce is one of her priorities, and she is understood to be honored to be selected by her peers to help lead this committee.

In a press release from her office, the Governor said, “In Washington, we have reduced class sizes, provided pay increases for teachers, and I have proposed increased standards at day care and pre-school centers, as well as a “Running Start” program for the trades that will provide pre-apprenticeship grants to students to pursue their interests. I look forward to the opportunity to share the experiences of Washingtonians with the rest of the country.”

High Skills, High Wages Update Focal Point of March Board Agenda

An update of *High Skills, High Wages* will highlight the Workforce Board’s March 16 board meeting. Open to the public, the meeting will take place at the WorkSource Thurston County office, Heritage Room, 1570 Irving Street S.W., Tumwater from 8:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Other topics on the Board’s agenda include the Eligible Training Provider List, an update on the Work Readiness Credential, and discussion of the Workforce Investment Act 10 Percent Funds.

People needing special accommodations should contact Julie Anderson at least seven days in advance at 360.753.5660, or janderson@wtb.wa.gov.

Briefly

Gallwas, Dixon and Arteaga on the Move

Gary Gallwas, assistant commissioner for the Employment & Training Division at the Employment Security Department (ESD) is the new area director for the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Area, based in Olympia. The move is something Gary has always wanted to try, and Dwight Wood's retirement from the area director position provides an opportunity to make that dream a reality. ESD also has appointed two new area directors: Todd Dixon for the Columbia Basin Workforce Development Area, based in Kennewick, and Frankie Arteaga for the Spokane Workforce Development Area. Congratulations to them all.

New WTB Website Coming in Early March

The Workforce Board is to launch its new website in early March. Easier to use (it has both navigational bars, as well as audience-specific features), the website will provide added depth about the Board’s members and its numerous activities—both statewide as well as nationally. In the Publications section, there are *Workforce Facts*, and sample OpEds and Letters to the Editor which can be found in Media Kits. Publications are also listed by type – plan, evaluation, or report to make information easier to find. Look for it early next month.

Upcoming Events

This year's *Washington Association of Occupational Educators'* annual Tech-Prep Conference takes place on **March 2-3** at the Pasco Red Lion. Details at www.wa-acte.org/pdf_files/06%20WAOE%20Brochure.pdf.

"Strengthening Linkages for Student Success" is the theme of the *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's* 2006 Collaboration Conference being held **March 22-24** at the DoubleTree Hotel, SeaTac. More details at www.k12.wa.us/conferences/Collaboration2006/default.aspx.

The dates are **March 23-24**, and the venue the Red Lion Hotel at the Park in Spokane for the *Washington Rural Health Association's* Northwest Regional Rural Health Conference. Check out details by contacting Kaarin Appel at 509.358.7509, kappel@wsu.edu.

The *National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium* will hold its annual spring meeting in Washington D.C at the Hilton Hotel **April 8-12**. For more details, watch NASDCTEC's website at www.careertech.org/

Mark **May 31 - June 3** for a conference in Minneapolis, MN sponsored by *Community-Campus Partnerships for Health*. The conference is geared for those interested in community-based participatory research, in service-learning, community and economic development, and partnership development. Learn more at <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/conf-overview.html>

Workforce Innovations 2006 will be held **July 11 - 13** at the Anaheim Convention Center, in Anaheim, CA. Co-sponsored by the *U.S. Department of Labor and the American Society for Training & Development*, this year's conference will focus on "Regional Strategies...Global Results: Talent Driving Prosperity." Online registration and agenda information will be available soon at www.workforceinnovations.org.